Violence Threat Risk Assessment Procedure

PROCEDURE

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Purpose

The VTRA (Violence Threat Risk Assessment) process is an evidence based, structured process used to assess potential threats of violence in individuals or situations. It involves evaluating various factors such as behavior, communication, and context to determine the level of risk posed and the potential strategies to mitigate that risk. VTRA procedures are often utilized in educational settings, workplaces, and communities to enhance safety and prevent violence.

This Georgian College VTRA Procedure outlines the internal reporting and threat assessment work of those who work and study at Georgian College. This procedure is intended to prevent and disrupt cycles of violence and trauma and to promote safe learning and work environments where students, faculty, staff and its community can engage comfortably and freely in all campus activities.

Georgian College is committed to taking steps to provide staff and students with appropriate education and awareness. Georgian College is committed to mapping a path forward to raise awareness and address the many issues caused by discrimination, racialized and gender-based violence, and systemic inequities. This procedure is a crucial step in working together to understand, prevent and respond to violence. As such, this procedure is an articulation of the commitment by Georgian College to work together to prevent and respond to violence, trauma, and suicide by using a multidisciplinary approach to ensure an effective disruption to cycles of violence and trauma in its community.

Key aspects include:

- Cultivating a safe and restorative community.
- Establishing relationships built on respect and trust.
- Encouraging ongoing dialogue, active listening, and information sharing.
- Recognizing individual backgrounds and needs when devising intervention plans.
- Fostering understanding within the college and its communities.

The VTRA Procedure outlines a comprehensive response to potential violence, encompassing prevention, early intervention, and intervention strategies.

Scope

This procedure applies to all Georgian College personnel and students as well as interested parties that have a connection to the college and/or one of its campuses.

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Individual of Concern	An individual who poses a concern to the Georgian College community on the basis of reported/shared observable data.
Risk Assessment	Risk assessment evaluates how an IOC might pose a future risk to a target. It involves a thorough evaluation of factors affecting the IOC's behavior. Trained team members may use additional tools to support intervention and risk management planning.
Student of Concern Committee	The Student of Concern Committee (SOCC) intervenes early with students at risk by collaborating with campus departments, faculty, and staff. Students showing concerning behaviors related to their well-being should be referred to SOCC. However, SOCC isn't the only communication channel and doesn't replace existing student services. When a student's behavior suggests a risk of violence or threat-making, SOCC may refer them to Campus Safety Services for VTRA assessment and consultation.
Threat	An expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be spoken, written, drawn, and/or posted on the internet or made by a gesture. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional, veiled or unauthored.
Threat Assessment	Threat Assessment is the process of determining *if* a threat-maker(s) actually poses a risk to the target(s) that they have threatened. While an IOC may engage in threat making behaviour, few actually pose a risk to harm the target they have threatened.

Threat-Making Behaviours	Any action that an individual, who in any manner knowingly utters, conveys, or causes any person to receive a threat or that causes a reasonable person to perceive that they have been threatened.
Violence	The continuing process of thoughts and behaviours that is dependent on the interaction between a person who is inclined to violence; a stimulus that causes the violence; and a setting that allows for violence or does nothing to prevent a violent act from occurring. Violence is dynamic and multidimensional and may be thought of as a range of behaviours which can change over time.

Responsibilities

Campus Communities:

- Be aware of this procedure and report any concerning behaviours

Executive Director of Campus Safety Services

- Authorizes activation of the various stages of the VTRA procedure

Student of Concern Committee

- Refers matters to the Executive Director of Campus Safety Services for Assessment team activation.

VTRA Steering Committee:

- Integrates the procedure into college operations, provides training and communicates VTRA principles.
- Reviews and updates the procedure on an annual basis.

Key Principles

1. **Shared Responsibility:** Everyone at Georgian College works together to plan interventions, share information, and implement safety measures to prevent threats and minimize harm to the community.
2. **VTRA Procedure Development:** Georgian College has created specific procedures and processes to ensure community safety and supports efforts to address concerning behaviors.
3. **Thorough Investigations:** Investigating threats requires careful examination of information. Trained personnel lead these investigations objectively and impartially.
4. **Training Commitment:** Georgian College ensures staff receive VTRA training from certified trainers, including Level I, Level II, and Traumatic Events Systems (TES) training.
5. **Community Partnership:** The college fosters inclusivity and collaboration to understand and address issues like bullying, discrimination, and violence. It involves individuals of concern and prioritizes violence prevention strategies tailored to their needs.

6. **Responsive Approach:** Georgian College responds promptly and consistently to incidents using interventions that repair harm and restore a sense of belonging while adhering to legal obligations and ensuring privacy rights.

Outcomes

- **Safe Reporting:** Members of the community have a safe and clear method to report worrisome behavior.
- **Violence Prevention:** Coordinated responses can prevent acts of violence.
- **Trauma Mitigation:** Timely responses reduce the impact of traumatic events, threats, or suicide attempts.
- **Support Services:** Support services are provided to those affected by threats or dangerous or tragic events.
- **Policy Improvement:** Learnings from this process lead to policy changes.
- **Staff Development:** The college ensures ongoing staff development overseen by the VTRA Steering Committee.

Procedure(s)

1.0 Understanding VTRA

Georgian College's Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) procedure is designed to manage threats safely and effectively, integrating trauma-informed approaches. By drawing on research from diverse fields and evolving based on best practices, this procedure prioritizes understanding and addressing the impact of trauma on individuals and communities. It employs a three-step process:

- **Data Collection and Immediate Interventions:** Quick actions to reduce immediate risks.
- **Comprehensive Risk Evaluation:** Thorough evaluation by a multidisciplinary team.
- **Comprehensive Interventions:** Single or multi-agency interventions to address risks.

The three-stepped process ensures that the Georgian College VTRA team proactively intervenes and protects potential targets and the person making the threat. The team collects and assesses data, involving the individual of concern in the process. If needed, a community protocol is activated for a broader external partner response.

2.0 Reporting

- If an individual becomes aware of a potential risk of violence during or at any time, call **Campus Security at 705-722-4000.**
- If a community member poses an Immediate Threat, follow the Georgian College Lockdown Procedure. ***Get Out. Hide. Fight.***
- Contact emergency services by **dialing 911** when safe to do so.

    - Provide all known details or information surrounding the incident, the threat and threat- maker.

- **Notify Georgian College Campus Security emergency line at 705-722-4000** when safe to do so. Provide all known details or information surrounding the incident, noting where you are, if you are now safe and that you've already called 911

- If in doubt about whether the behaviour merits reporting, **CONSULT** with:
    - Campus Security Operations – Site Supervisor or Shift Supervisor **705-722-5100**
    - Campus Safety Services during business hours **705-722-1586**
    - Counselling Services during business hours **1-877-722-1523**

Reporting worrisome behaviors is vital for campus safety at Georgian College. Regardless of background or diagnosis, anyone displaying worrying signs should be reported promptly to Campus Safety Services or the Student of Concern Committee. Threats, ranging from verbal to online messages, warrant immediate attention and investigation, even if they don't meet legal threat definitions. Different levels of risk demand tailored responses, with immediate threats requiring emergency measures such as contacting emergency services, high-risk behaviors necessitating swift action possibly involving police coordination, and worrisome behaviors meriting assessment and potential intervention.

After reporting, a Georgian College VTRA team will assess the situation and take appropriate action.

3.0 Balancing Safety and the VTRA procedure

3.1. Non punitive

The VTRA procedure is not punitive and aims to understand and evaluate risks to prevent harm. Each case and individual are approached uniquely, with a trauma-informed perspective and a timely response.

3.2 Police Services

Police services play a crucial role in VTRA activities, balancing legal obligations with overall community safety. Police may delay participation until overriding concerns are addressed. Open communication between police and assessment teams is vital to ensure effective collaboration.

3.3 Case Management of Minors

When minors are involved in VTRA cases, clear communication and proper procedures are followed, including notifying parents/guardians and maintaining confidentiality.

4.0 Communications

Timely and accurate communication is crucial in today's digital age, considering the accessibility of information via the internet and social media. It's essential to provide accurate information from

authorized sources while respecting privacy rights and ongoing investigations.

Members of the Georgian College community do not communicate independently with the media. Instead, a VTRA Communications Subcommittee, including communication staff and team delegates, develops communication strategies collaboratively. Consistent messaging helps alleviate anxiety, especially in cases involving parallel criminal investigations, reassuring the college community of safety efforts.

In cases involving criminal investigations stemming from VTRA cases, the police lead media releases. The college supports these efforts by issuing joint media releases when necessary.

5.0 Documentation

Records and documentation management must adhere to Georgian College's Privacy Policy (AD-004) and Ontario's privacy legislation.

6.0 Meetings and Assessments

Meetings and assessments records are securely stored on an online platform managed by Campus Safety Services, accessible to relevant team members and partners within privacy regulations.

Information shared during assessment meetings is strictly confidential, limited to what is necessary for assessment, and accessible only to involved team members.

The Manager of Conflict Resolution and Investigations or designate ensures completion of case documentation under VTRA.

Information sharing, storage, and retention follow privacy legislation, ensuring confidentiality and limited access based on necessity and purpose.

Requests to amend or access information are handled according to relevant legislation.

7.0 Interviews, Investigations and Case Notes

Interviews, investigations, and case management data are treated with utmost confidentiality, shared only when necessary for protecting life and safety, and in compliance with privacy legislation. Access to this information is restricted to team members conducting casework.

8.0 Fair Notice

All members of the college community will receive information about the policy against violence and threats, ensuring everyone is aware that such behavior is unacceptable. Georgian College's Fair Notice will be available on the college website and included in the onboarding process for new staff.

Additionally, it will be referenced during "Lockdown" training sessions held at the start of each semester for both staff and students.

8.1 Notification of Potential Targets:

The VTRA Procedure aims to prevent violence by identifying, protecting, and supporting targets of threats within the college community. Targets will be notified promptly, particularly if the threat is clear, direct, and plausible, or if violence seems imminent. If the threat is unclear, data will be collected before notifying to avoid unnecessary trauma. Georgian College's designated VTRA team will activate internal support and tragic event response procedures to assist the targets throughout the process.

9.0 Information Sharing:

While privacy is important, legislation permits the release of personal information in cases of imminent threat to health and safety. Georgian's designated VTRA team share relevant information within legal boundaries to prevent threats and minimize danger to the community. Privacy considerations are made but overridden when necessary to protect individuals and communities.

10.0 Trauma Response:

The college responds proportionately to traumatic events, ensuring privacy and minimizing trauma. Follow-up VTRA casework is conducted in consultation with trauma response leaders to provide support to those affected by tragic events and/or violence.

11.0 Training:

Georgian College educates its community on the VTRA procedure to foster a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. Training opportunities, including workshops and sessions are offered. The college ensures education and training for involved personnel and also participates in community-based training.

Appendices

Contact	Phone	Email
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